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CHAUTAUQUA IMPRESSIONS.

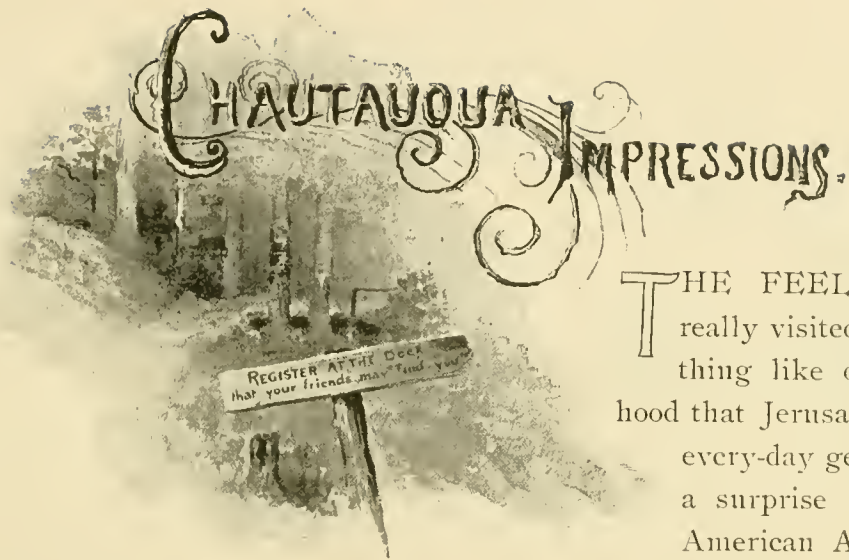
By
Helen P. Strong.





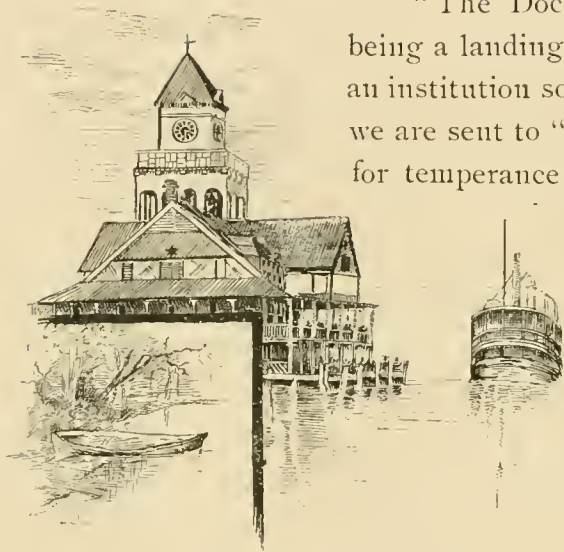
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Helen P. Strong.

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THE FEELING of one who has really visited Chautauqua is something like our discovery in childhood that Jerusalem was a real place in every-day geography. One is such a surprise to one's self in this American Athens that he is quite

prepared for the suggestion urged by guide-posts at every corner to "*Register at the Dock, that your friends may find you*"—a practical bit of advice that might otherwise seem an intrusion to one who has traveled day and night to find a place where, for a brief time, even his friends could not find him.



"The Dock," by the way, at Chautauqua (aside from being a landing-place and a bureau of general information) is an institution so far imbued with the "Chautauqua idea" that we are sent to "the dock" for scientific instruction books and for temperance literature, while it is quite suggestive of the

principle "Holiness to the Lord on the bells of the horses" to be in a place where even the steamboat landing is so exalted above the common uses of such a place as to be crowned by a chime of bells which soothes the saints to sleep, nightly, with the tune, "How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord."

But even a gateway so consecrated introduces us to the first heaven, only, of this paradise. Some concession must be made, even at Chautauqua, to excursionists in whom the "Hall of the Grove" and the "Golden Gate" awaken no raptures, and peanuts and pop-corn exhale appetizing odors from Alliug's candy-kitchen on the one hand,

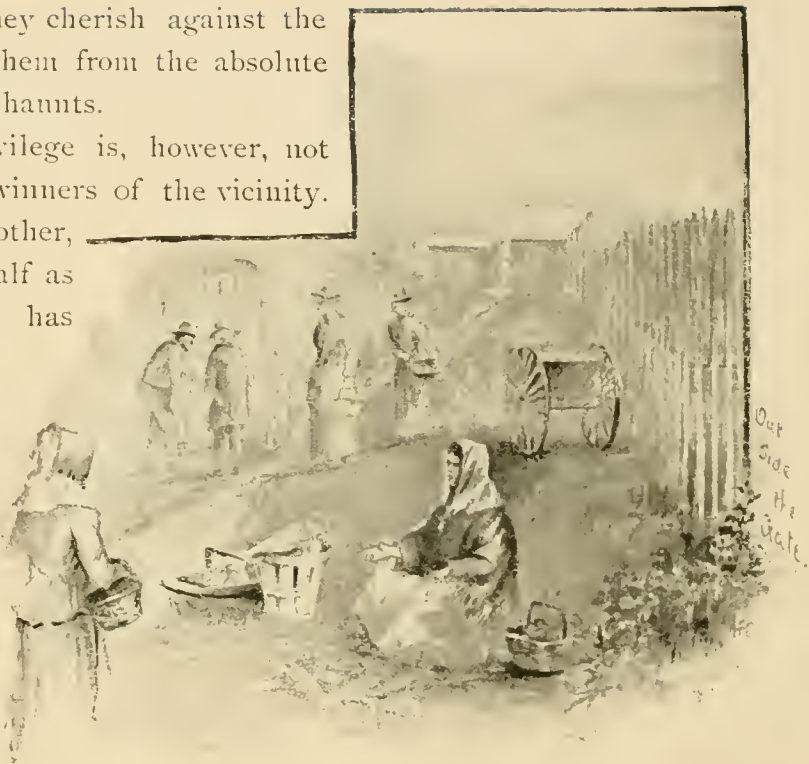
while on the other, the display of sea-shells and trinkets betray a relationship with the ordinary summer resort which is only relieved by the neighboring book-stalls, where C. L. S. C. literature is offered for sale, and where the shelves of "Pansy books" may be measured by the yard.

Climbing a short but steep hill, we come to Vincent Avenue, and the short block where meat and milk stands on one side, and a hardware, a dry-goods and one or two grocery stores, with the all-important post-office, on the other, furnish all the physical ministrations required in this intellectual retreat. The only business *competition* attempted at Chautauqua is outside the upper gate, where vegetables and meats are brought in wagons by traffickers, whom the gate fee deters from closer contact with consumers. The scene presented by these eager traders, with carts and wagons, waiting for customers through the summer mornings makes one think of the merchants and sellers who lodged without the gate of Jerusalem in Nehemiah's time. That the judgment of one's nearest neighbors is not always the surest guide to a true estimate of one's character is illustrated by the fact that, to these outside traders, "the Chautauqua idea" means an unprincipled monopoly. To some of these native Chautauquans not even such opportunities for mental and moral culture, brought to their doors, can

atone for the grievance they cherish against the high fence which separates them from the absolute freedom of their childhood's haunts.

Such disregard of privilege is, however, not characteristic of the bread-winners of the vicinity. Here is a hard-working mother, with eight children and half as many grandchildren, who has passed proudly under the arches as a C. L. S. C. graduate. Here is a builder who finds time to slip away from his work for snatches of lectures on "Volapük" and the "Inductive method."

Our interest was excited one moonlight night,



a few years ago, after the curfew chimes had sounded, and quiet had settled down over the tents and cottages hidden away among the trees, by elocutionary sounds proceeding from the "chamber in the wall" occupied by two young men who were in charge of one of the gates. The next day, when programmes were distributed through the amphitheatre announcing an inter-collegiate oratorical contest, the secret was out; one of our courteous gate-keepers was a college student of no mean ability and one of the orators for the day.

Aimlessness has no place in the Chautauqua life. Alternatives are constantly presenting themselves, which force some mental activity upon one even in deciding what line to study or what lectures to attend. A bill-poster, mounted upon a two-wheeled vehicle, passes through the grounds every evening, and in the morning, bulletin boards and tree trunks are emblazoned with inviting programmes of the day's privileges. "Choose ye" is the problem whose solution is, each day, interesting, if not momentous. "Some things must be left out" is the motto for the over-ambitious.

Even at the risk of becoming subjects for a churchyard elegy, not a few are seen, before eight o'clock in the morning,

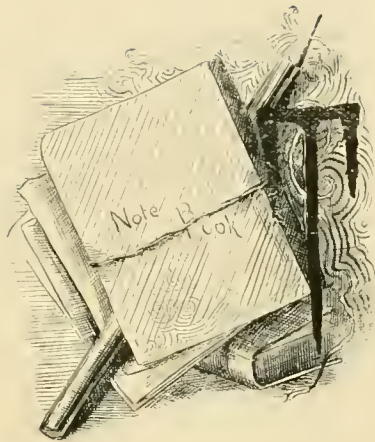


"Brushing, with hasty steps, the dews away,
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn,"

on the way to the College of Liberal Arts, or Normal Hall.

"Chautauqua," said one of the speakers at the ovation given to this modern institution, on one of the opening nights, "Chautauqua is not only the best *Summer* school, it is the best *school* in the land ;" adding, " It is true Yale and Johns

Hopkins are places where our Professors get in practice during the Winter for their work here in the Summer." Some foundation may be found for such a boast in the array of instructors, representing Colleges, Universities, and Theological Seminaries, from Maryland to Nebraska, with Prof. W. R. Harper, Ph. D., of Yale, as principal.



THE SCHOOL of the English Bible, (treating the Book from a literary and historical standpoint) is an interesting feature of Chautauqua. The classes meet from eight to twelve every morning in the unplastered cottages used as annexes to the College, and are well attended by an appreciative company of students with note-books in hand.

Dr. Harper himself attracts full classes. The *amount* accomplished by this indefatigable worker is only equalled by his thoroughness. Too absorbed in his subject for self-consciousness, he fairly digs into the heart of the old prophecies, takes them

apart, sorts and resorts them, and then with a quick movement readjusts his glasses upon his short nose, and with gestures enforced by a bit of chalk, held in readiness for black-board work, he focuses his vision to shut out all distracting things, and brings the entire situation and the purpose of the prophet before us as graphically as though they hung tangibly in mid-air.

His sentences follow each other in a hurried torrent until the last moment of the hour, when, with his Revised Version under his arm, and his beaver hat pushed back from his forehead until its rim rests upon his shoulders, he starts up the hill toward the College on a run, to enter as enthusiastically upon the next hour's work of teaching Hebrew after the inductive method.

Narrowness is incompatible with the "Chautauqua Idea." Culture, many-sided, is the watchword; "Look up and lift up," the motto.

Theories, opinions, even in advance of the progressive readers of Chautauqua, are courteously admitted for discussion. "Questions of the day" are in order continually. There is no subject of vital interest to the world which is not ventilated upon these platforms. Whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, these are furnished as food for thought.

There is no better way of getting general knowledge than the habit of learning from every one we meet the thing of which he knows most. The man is never dry who is intensely interested in his subject. Specialists—hobbyists, if you please--(if you have enough of them) can give you a wider education than you can get by calling upon a host of talented men for speeches on a subject of your own choosing.

This principle is evidently understood by the projectors of the Chautauqua programme. Even Volapük becomes attractive when advocated by Mr. Charles E. Sprague, the highest authority on the universal language in this country ; while Harper on the "Monuments," Townsend on the "Jesuits," and Dr. Buckley on "Religious Superstition," each carries his audience, for the time at least, upon the current of his own convictions.



HIS WAS surely the secret of the interested audiences who remained day after day, from eleven until half-past twelve, undisturbed by the intrusive dinner-bells which claimed attention on every side of the amphitheatre, to listen to Mrs. Abba Gould Woolson's overflowing enthusiasm for English literature and history. Mrs. Woolson's tempting way of giving occasional glimpses of her views (she is a Boston woman) awakened a desire to hear her lecture on some of the popular questions of the day; but when such a proposition was presented to her, she replied with characteristic promptness, "Who would take care of my kings and queens? There are plenty of people to talk of these other things." Indeed, I doubt if Mrs. Woolson's ability to handle the political history of England may not do more to demonstrate her *own* right, at least to "political

equality" than any amount of argument could do in these days when, as Mrs. Browning puts it :

"A woman cannot do the thing she ought,
Which means whatever perfect thing she can,
In life, in art, in science, but she fears
To let the perfect action take her part,
And rest there; she must prove what she can do
Before she does it,—prate of woman's rights,
Of woman's mission, woman's function, till
The men (who are prating, too, on their side) cry,
A woman's function plainly is, to talk."

When Chautauqua "did itself the honor" (as Mrs. Woolson herself might have expressed it, if the honored one had been one of her favorite authors instead of herself) to give the rare Chautauqua salute at the close of her course of lectures, the Chancellor prefaced his call for the "White Lilies" with the quotation :

"To have known her was a liberal education ;"
a worthy tribute from a worthy source.

Lewis Miller, the father of Chautauqua, welcomed the Assembly of 1888 with the cordial declaration that, having paid the gate-fee, visitors might consider themselves entitled to speak to everyone they met without further introduction. Though something more than even Lewis Miller's valued authority might be needed to insure familiarity with genius, one has at least the privilege at Chautauqua of becoming acquainted with the appearance of celebrities.

Lecturers must often have frequent opportunity to sit on the same level with ministers and authors. Perhaps no face is more eagerly looked for than that of "Pansy" (Mrs. G. R. Alden), whose writings have, doubtless, gone far toward giving Chautauqua its world-wide reputation. She and her husband have a cottage here, and though quiet and reserved in manner, she may be seen any day in company with Mrs. C. M. Livingstone, her sister, or her friend "Faye Huntington," with note-book or stenograph, listening to lectures and addresses.



become listeners, and audiences sit on the same level with ministers and authors. Perhaps no face is more "Pansy" (Mrs. G. R. Alden), whose writings have, doubtless, gone far toward giving Chautauqua its world-wide reputation. She and her husband have a cottage here, and though quiet and reserved in manner,

One has only to strike Pratt Avenue, when the eleven o'clock tide is setting from

the College toward the amphitheatre, to feel the Chautauqua atmosphere. Instead of the empty streets and closed blinds, seen at this hour of the day in fashionable summer resorts, everybody is awake and abroad. instead of society conversation, the flow of talk is fed from the platform and the lecture hall.

"Poor, dear David!" sighs a bustling little woman, and the genuine but tardy sympathy with the old king of Israel betrays the influence of Prof. Harper's



summing up of David's life, and awakens an appreciative response from two strangers fresh from the same class-room, and their common interest in the subject furnishes sufficient introduction for a pleasant interchange of thought on topics not usually touched upon on first acquaintance. There is no necessity for exhausting the weather topic when excuse can be found for discussing the "Brahmo Somaj" on the way to the post-office with a stranger, who proves to be a missionary who has spent years in India.





ET US FOLLOW the stream of people which fills the street (sidewalks are little used, even where they exist,) leading to the Amphitheatre. If you are a stranger, disappointment awaits you. Mind, not matter, is in the ascendancy here, and the unpainted posts and bare, well-worn seats (were ever boards so hard?) do not look inviting, while the twelve descending aisles lead downward to a pit of forbidding gloom.

This is but a first impression, however, and does not seem to be confirmed by the crowds who are rapidly filling the place. Strangers in the Amphitheatre always betray them-

selves by the eager way in which they press forward to the vacant sittings scattered about in apparently desirable localities, only to evince their disappointment when they find their view obstructed by the immovable posts which their wiser neighbors have avoided. There seems to be no way to obviate this waste of otherwise popular seats, unless it can be arranged to assign such sittings to those Christian Scientists who can succeed in convincing themselves that the posts have no existence. The organ recital is over, and the Chancellor's son, "George the First," appears upon the platform—manly, strong, commanding attention with the first sound of his voice :

"Telegrams at the Hotel Athenæum for ——." Can you tell why there are always telegrams at the hotel for about three people, seldom more, seldom less? The uniformity of such things, like the life insurance probabilities, always seem to hint at undiscovered laws governing human events.

Now, the announcements for the day. These constitute the bill of fare, always presented by Mr. Geo. Vincent with a peculiar smack of the lips, which tempts one's mental appetite to over-indulgence. Preliminaries are usually tedious, but whether conducted by Bishop Vincent or his son (who claims the title of Introducer Extraordinary), Chautauqua preliminaries are always entertaining. Each speaker has at the

outset the advantage of the happiest introduction possible. Indeed, having listened to the preliminaries, we may decide to forego the rest of the morning's programme, and save ourselves for some other part of the day's doings.

"The survival of the fittest" sometimes (not always) determines the size of these audiences. If the lecturer or performer fails to hold the people by *what he has to give them*, he loses his chance of holding them. He has in his favor not even the determination of economical souls to endure what they have paid for at the door, for doors and fees alike are wanting. Chautauqua audiences being free to come seem to feel equally free to go, and so merciless are they in the exercise of this freedom that one speaker took occasion to thank his hearers at the beginning of his lecture for their presence, saying that he "might not have an opportunity to do so at the close"—a happy thought, and one capable of wider application. Most Chautauqua speakers have learned thus to strike the right chord at the outset. It is one of the cases where delay is dangerous.

Passengers from the Lake boats, who step ashore at the Assembly grounds for the first time, are puzzled by a confused array of mounds, heaps, stones and ditches, which prove upon investigation to be a carefully laid-out plan of the Holy Land. Following



the shore of the Lake, which, with some disregard of the real points of the compass, is made to do duty as the Mediterranean Sea, the visitor finds himself equipped with seven-league boots, which enable him to step across the River Jordan without waiting for the dividing of the waters, and the way in which one may stride over the Philistine out-posts of Gath and Gaza puts to shame the feat of Samson with the gates of the latter city, while the giant hero of the former, with his idle boasts, need scarcely be mentioned. Truly even Caleb and Joshua would confess that there are giants in the Canaan of Chautauqua.

A similar device, by which the limitations of time as well as space are overcome, is found on Pratt Avenue, where the "rise and fall of the Roman Empire" is staked out by guide-posts extending over a fifteen minutes' walk from the Amphitheatre to the College. We had noticed these monumental inscriptions, commemorating historical and biographical events, for a whole fortnight before we discovered method

in their madness—now huddled uncomfortably together, and now straggling a block apart ; but the evidence of a designer, which is never wanting at Chautauqua, appeared when we began at the right end of the avenue, and discovered that intervals of time were indicated by intervals of space.

It would require a large volume to do justice to the lectures and sermons, to the great choir, and the quartettes, the glee clubs, and the Boston Stars ; to the modest but popular Miss Parks, with her ever-ready cornet ; to the sensationalists of platform and pulpit ; to the stereopticon views, the ideal tours, and the C. L. S. C. Round Table ; to the memory lessons, so much needed in an age pithily characterized by the instructor as “ one of pistols and pencils ” rather than of “ muscle and memory ; ” to the training schools for temperance, Sunday-school and missionary work ; the “ Feast of Lanterns,” the Athenian watch fires, the gymnastics—the

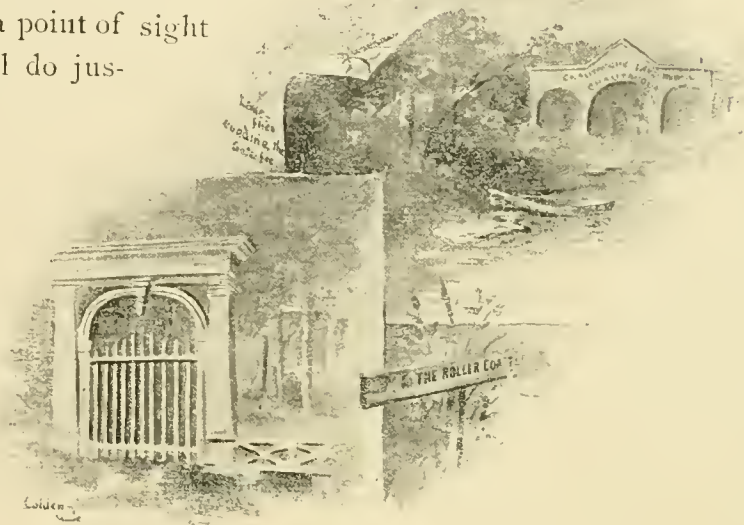


Roller Coaster. It will not be expected that the uninitiated should pass within the ropes and attempt to describe Recognition Day, with its impressive ceremony, and its "rainbow salute," with the unlocking of the Golden Gate to the long, long procession of graduates, who must be addressed and rewarded, and sealed, and finally, at the evening carnival—burlesqued.

This little book has to do with impressions only, and with the impressions of two people who made a home for themselves within these grounds for a few weeks without the restraints and annoyances of boarding, and to whom, perhaps, the most lasting impression of all may be the quiet intervals on a certain upper floor, where the precise divisions between cellar and pantry, bed-room and parlor, were born of the imagination, with delightful independence of material limitations. It is hoped that the reputation of the Hotel Athenæum will be in nowise affected by the statement that not even the college-bred service of that grand institution can furnish the domestic felicity which comes from the combination of two congenial spirits, a kerosene stove and the freedom of the market. Nowhere in Chautauqua were there such sunsets, such wide outlooks upon sky and lake, such pure air, such freedom from lake flies—mosquitoes are unknown in Chautauqua—such restful, quiet nights, such royal living, as in that retired domicile.

There is something to stir ambition in the very trees of Chautauqua. The mammoth stumps left standing here and there suggest the forest primeval, while the beeches, ironwoods and maples now growing tower upwards in their undeviating perpendicular to such a height that a point of sight can hardly be found that will do justice to both top and bottom within the radius of a single picture.

If, however, we consider the trees as a standard of human development (as Whittier, "among the hills," looks for "a man to match his mountains"), Chautauquans cannot be said "to



creep dwarfed and debased below them," even in physical stature, when such 'Titans as Bishop William Taylor and Rev. Phillips Brooks stand before us. The appearance and character of these two men would almost argue that large souls are best developed in large bodies. Surely one's environments alone do not determine one's breadth of thought, for these men—one from Boston's centre of culture and the other from the heart of the Dark Continent—come to us with the same truth, each peculiarly eloquent in his way, with large-hearted, outreaching sympathy for humanity. Phillips Brooks preaches the "Light of the World" as shining upon lives dwarfed, helpless, blind, and lifting them with tender, helpful power into a new world of light and growth and beauty. Bishop Taylor carries the same light to the same need, responding to the religious instinct fluttering beneath heathen superstition with the loving message, "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you." One of the most vivid impressions of



the Chantauqua platform in our memory is the picture of this rugged missionary, huge in his projects as in his stature, proving to his favored audience their kinship with the dying African, whose religious culture had been confined to "the primary school" of nature, "God's kindergarten for the race," while we are withholding from him the knowledge of "God's provision for a high school, for a grand Chantauqua for the race," which was intended to be as far reaching, "under the written revelation and a proclaimed Gospel," as the "primary school" has been.

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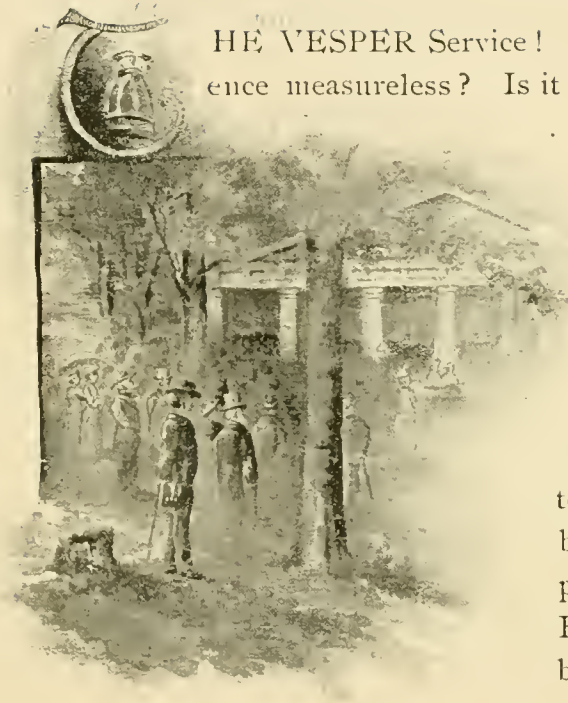
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A Chantauqua Sabbath! No boats, no trains, no driving—quiet, restful, worshipful. The shut gates suggest a discussion of separation as a principle entering into

the final adjustment of good and evil. "It is easy," says one, "to shut yourself up to a quiet Sabbath, with the rest of the world shut out;" but, after all, is it not the best way, perhaps the *only* way? Indeed, will it not be the Divine way, when the line shall be drawn, not accidentally, but infallibly, and God Himself shall shut the door?

Like oases in the desert, are these spots: reservations growing sadly less in number, where the madly driving wheels of our week-day civilization are compelled to come to a stand-still one day in seven, that man may straighten himself to look above his own level. A printed morning service is circulated through the Amphitheatre. The platform becomes a pulpit for the day, and earnest, able, eloquent sermons fall upon an appreciative assembly from the lips of ministers, Bishops, and Doctors of Divinity of national reputation. In the afternoon, Lewis Miller, brimful of Sabbath-school work, conducts an adult Bible class in the Amphitheatre. Blackboard lessons, with all the modern Sunday-school appliances, are used to instruct the children, in another building. Later, a lecture on Christian Ethics is given to young people, where the gray hairs, so characteristic of Y. M. C. A.'s and Y. P. S. C. E.'s, are positively prohibited, the line limiting the age of attendants to twenty-five years being relentlessly drawn.



THE VESPER Service! What is the charm which makes its influence measureless? Is it the stillness and the hour?

“Day is dying in the west,
Heaven is touching earth with rest.

This is the opening hymn, and the touch of Heaven seems to be upon the assembly, to the very outermost rim of worshippers, standing unwearied outside the crowded Hall of Philosophy, beneath the trees, flecked by changing lights and shadows; and there

is a tenderness, a closeness of sympathy (born of that common sense of need which puts human nature at its humblest and its best) in the swelling notes :

“ Lord of life, beneath the dome
Of the universe, Thy home,
Gather us who seek Thy face
To the fold of Thy embrace,
For Thou art nigh.”

Then, like the sound of many waters, is the voice of the multitude, as leader and people climb together the beautiful rounds of that ladder of aspiration and adoration, the prayer of Thomas à Kempis, while they read responsively :

“ Above all things, and in all things, O my soul, thou shalt rest in the Lord alway, for He himself is the everlasting rest of the saints.

Grant us, O God, to rest in Thee, above all creatures,
Above all health and beauty,
Above all glory and honor,
Above all power and dignity,
Above all knowledge and subtilty,
Above all riches and arts,
Above all joy and gladness,
Above all fame and praise,
Above all sweetness and comfort,
Above all hope and promise,
Above all desert and desire,
Above all gifts and benefits that Thou canst give and impart to us,
Above all mirth and joy that the mind of man can receive and feel,
Finally, above angels and archangels, and above all the heavenly host,
Above all things visible and invisible,
And above all that Thou art not, O, our God.
Because, Thou, O Lord, our God, art supremely good above all;
Thou alone art most high,
Thou alone most powerful,
Thou alone most full and sufficient,
Thou alone most sweet and most full of consolation,
Thou alone art most lovely and loving,

Thou alone most noble and glorious above all things,
In whom all good things together most perfectly are, and ever have been, and shall be."

Then the *Gloria*, after which, words of encouragement, of promise, of prayer, read responsively, are interspersed with another of Miss Lathbury's tender hymns, and the night song, with its uplifting sentiment :

" All the earth is wrapped in shadow,
Steep and rugged climbs our way;
Dare we hope to look enraptured
From the mountain-top some day ?
O press onward still ! forever
Turns the earth to meet the light,
Cometh swift and sure the morning,
When our feet shall tread the light."

And then—the animating spirit of the whole—the helpful, earnest, tender words

of the Chancellor, who knows, as few men know, how to improve without dispelling the influence of such an hour; how to be in full sympathy with the sentiment of the place without a touch of sentimentality; how to be practical without being commonplace. "Temptation is opportunity." How the phrase glows with meaning under his graphic description—nay, under his very impersonation—of the soul struggling with evil, and either sinking to a lower plane of living, as a consequence of defeat, or rising to a higher, with victory.

Other men may entertain us or bewilder us with theology, other men may grow eloquent *about* religion; Bishop Vincent has the rarest of rare faculties, of living our religious experience with us.

Keble's familiar hymn, "Sun of my Soul," follows the closing prayer, and at last, after the benediction, the desire of all is fitly expressed in the one stanza of Woodstock, which closes this impressive service:

"Thus, when *life's* toilsome day is o'er,
May its departing ray
Be calm as this impressive hour,
And lead to endless day."

The END



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